(c) the estimate of its demand during the year 2004-05;

(d) the total quantum of LPG imported during the said period;

(e) its price during the same period, separately; and

(f) the countries from which gas was purchased alongwith country-wise rates?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The demand of LPG during the years 2002-03 and 2003-04 was 8,352 Thousand Metric Tons (TMT) and 9,307 (provisional) TMT respectively.

(c) The estimated demand of LPG during the year 2004-05 is 10,127 TMT.

(d) The total quantity of LPG imported during the year 2002-03 and 2003-04 by Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and by the parallel marketeers was 1,073 TMT and 1,708 TMT respectively.

(e) The price of imported LPG has been in the range of $ 210-330 per Metric Tonne during the year 2003-04.

(f) LPG was imported mainly from 4 countries namely Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Malaysia. The cost price of the LPG imported from any of these countries is the same in a month and was within the range of $ 210-330 per MT during 2003-04.

ONGC Videsh's Overseas Projects

290. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC Videsh has invested for exploration and production of crude oil in foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the terms of which these investments have been made, benefits expected and the risk factors involved?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) ONGC-Videsh Limited (OVL) has been acquiring Participating Interests in exploration blocks and

development fields abroad for equity oil and gas in order to enhance the security of the country's supply of hydrocarbons: They have already entered into collaborations for exploration and production of oil and gas in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Russia, Sudan, Syria and Vietnam.

(c) Investments in overseas projects by the company are being made as per Government guidelines. These projects are governed by their respective Production Sharing Agreements/Joint Operating Agreements signed between the consortium partners and the host government. The investment in these exploration and production (E&P) projects is expected to get equity oil to augment the country's energy security in addition to financial returns to OVL. Prior to investment, during the stage of project evaluation, OVL takes into consideration various risks on account of political, regional, social, commercial, business, legal, technical and environmental factors.

National Gas Hydrate Programme

291. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that GAIL has taken up National Gas Hyderate Programme which can be a cheaper source of gas when compared to LNG to meet the needs of the country;

(b) whether any research centre has been set up in the area of gas hydrates; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. GAIL is involved in the National Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP) which is at the Research and Development stage.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The NGHP does not have a dedicated research centre but networks a number of institutes involved in R&D in this area.